ILLINOIS

CPRD | Center for Prevention Research & Development

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Survey of Illinois Home Visiting - Impact of COVID-19
Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)
April 2020

Introduction

The Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD) sponsored an online survey of Illinois Home Visitors and Home Visiting Supervisors to gather information on recent changes and adaptations to their work during the COVID-19 health emergency. The information can assist funders and partners with understanding what's working, what's challenging and the types of supports needed as home visiting agencies continue to serve families in Illinois communities and provide them with supports in new and different ways.

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Methods

The MIECHV COVID-19 Home Visitor and Home Visiting Supervisor survey was administered online from April 13 to 17, 2020. Building on the information that Illinois MIECHV learned from several group calls in early April with home visitors and home visiting supervisors who reported that they were continuing to engage with families and conduct virtual visits, the survey was designed to expand this knowledge in order to understand the approaches being used for virtual visits, current challenges, successes, and supports needed by home visitors.

A link to the online survey was emailed to Illinois home visitors and home visiting supervisors by the GOECD and other home visiting funders and partners in the state. Each home visitor and supervisor were asked to complete the survey one time. The total respondents to the survey was 322. Sixty-nine percent of respondents were home visitors; 39% were supervisors. Respondents were funded by more than eight funding streams and represented more than seven home visiting models.

Overview of Key Findings

Virtual Visits

- More than half of home visitors (59%) have kept engaged with 75% to 100% of their families.
- The majority of home visiting agencies (80%) are still receiving referrals.
- Home visitors are currently delivering virtual home visiting services to families via phone calls (94%) and video visits (82%).
- The typical length of a visit/call at this time is at least 30 minutes.
- The biggest challenge with scheduling visits is that families are busy with children/family at home.
- 67% of home visitors are completing assessments or screenings virtually.
- The biggest challenge with conducting phone visits is that families have limited phone or data plans.
- The biggest challenge with conducting video visits is that families have technology limitations such as lack of computer and unstable internet connection.
- The following resources have been difficult to provide to parents at this time: diapers and wipes; basic household items including disinfecting products; and food/formula.

Remote Work

- A third of home visitors indicated that it is challenging to work remotely.
- The number one resource that home visitors said would be helpful for them with remote work is a printer (66%). Additionally, 35% said a headset with microphone would also be helpful, 27% need an internet hot spot, and one fourth indicated that "adjusted/flexible schedule outside their previously held office hours" would be beneficial.
- More than half of home visitors (53%) indicated that supervision has increased.
- Almost all home visitors (93%) are able to access online training.

Demographics of Survey Participants

1. What is your role?
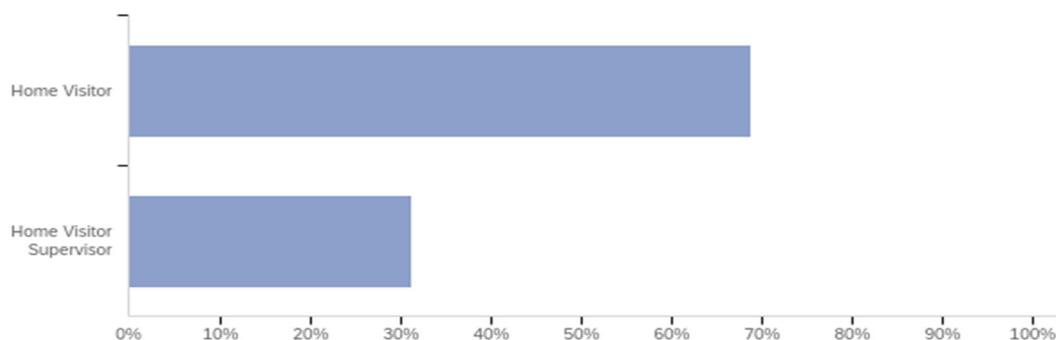
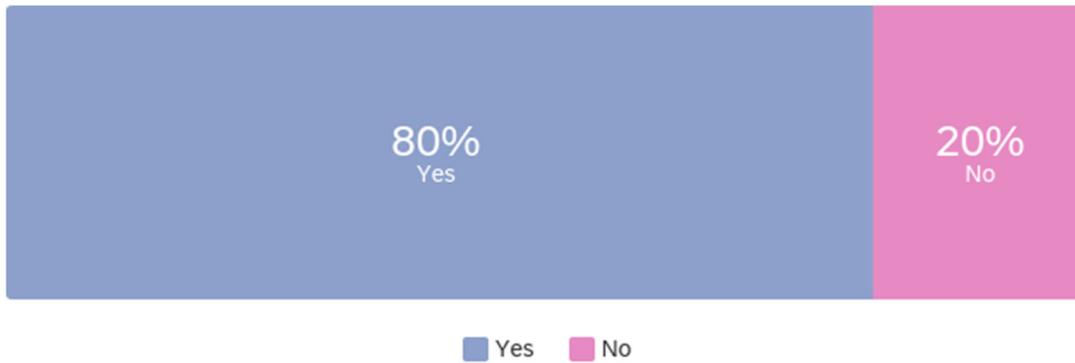| Answer	%	Count
Home Visitor	69%	220
Home Visitor Supervisor	31%	100
Total	100%	320

2. Where does your funding for home visiting come from? (Check all that apply)

Answer	%	Count
MIECHV	27%	86
DHS	29%	92
EHS	3%	11
ISBE PI	35%	113
DFSS	8%	25
Private	3%	9
Ounce of Prevention Fund	28%	90
Other (United Way, Title 20, local funding)	3%	11
Total		320

3. Which program model are you currently implementing? (Check all that apply)

Answer	%	Count
Parents as Teachers	45%	144
Healthy Families Illinois	46%	147
Early Head Start	2%	7
Nurse Family Partnership	2%	5
Baby Talk	6%	19
Family Connects	2%	5
Home Instruction for Parents of Youngsters (HIPPY)	0%	1
Family Spirit	0%	0
Other (Family Case Management, Better Birth Outcomes, Teen Family Support, Doula, PI, Partners for Healthy Baby)	3%	10
Total		321

4. Is your program receiving referrals at this time?

Answer	%	Count
Yes	80%	258
No	20%	64
Total	100%	322

Virtual Visits

5. Please indicate how you are currently delivering virtual home visiting services to your enrolled families. (Check all that apply)

Answer	%	Count
Text messaging	63%	200
Video Visits (FaceTime/Zoom/Skype or other digital platform)	82%	260
Phone calls	94%	296
Mailing information	25%	80
Other (delivering education information and activities to client homes, emailing or mailing education information and activities, please describe), texting links to information and curriculum materials, Facebook groups, What's App,	11%	34
Total		316

6. What is the typical length of a visit/call? (Choose one)

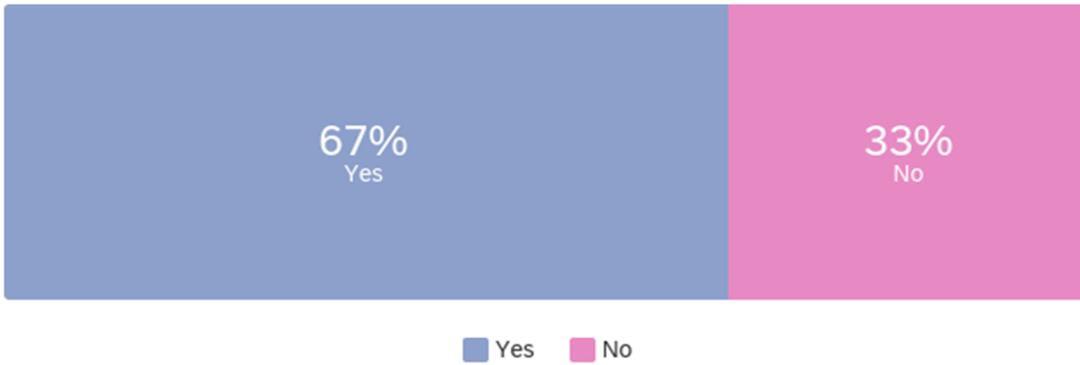| Answer	%	Count
1-15 minutes	4%	14
16-30 minutes	17%	52
31-45 minutes	36%	112
46-60 minutes	39%	123
Over 60 minutes	4%	11
Total	100%	312

7. Are there challenges with scheduling visits? (Check all that apply)

Answer	%	Count
Families not comfortable with phone/video visit	40%	122
Families not interested	26%	78
Families too busy with children/other family members at home	63%	190
Families with limited phone plans or data plans	51%	156
Other (no response from some families, difficult to find a time with families who are essential workers, some families are overwhelmed, some families are in crisis and cannot commit to a specific time, families not able to use the same technology as the home visitor)	21%	63
Total		303

## 8. What methods are you using to share activities? (Check all that apply)

Answer	%	Count
Mailing prior to visit	19%	58
Dropping off handouts prior to visit	21%	67
Emailing /Texting activity sheets	80%	251
Posting on Facebook or other social media or digital platform	19%	61
Describing over phone	71%	222
Demonstrating on video call	58%	180
Other (sending via What's App, sharing my screen via Zoom during visit, using materials the family already has in their home, creating a video of reading book or doing an activity, pre-existing online formats such as YouTube)	5%	17
Total		313

9. Have you completed any assessments or screenings virtually?

Answer	%	Count
Yes	67%	198
No	33%	99
Total	100%	297

10. During your virtual visits, what amount of time is typically spent on program requirements vs. other concerns related to family issues such as loss of income, lack of child care, lack of resources such as diapers, etc.,

% Program requirements

43

0   100

% Other concerns

42

0   100
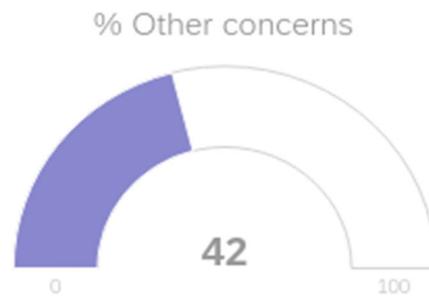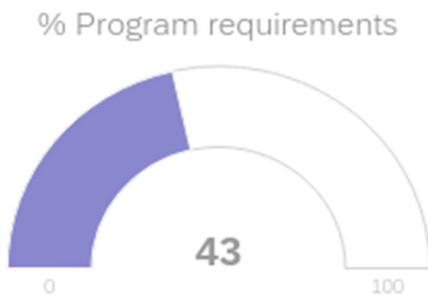
11. What are the most challenging limitations of completing phone call (without video) visits at this time? (Check all that apply) If you are not doing phone visits, please skip this question.

Answer	%	Count
Confidentiality /HIPPA concerns	15%	42
Families in crisis	41%	115
Families with limited phone plans or data plans	50%	142
Family not comfortable doing phone visit	26%	73
Home visitor has children at home and hard to focus without interruption	37%	106
Home visitor uncomfortable doing visit due to limitations of work-at-home set up	8%	24
Home visitor using personal cell phone	11%	30
Lack of guidance on how to complete visit over phone	7%	19
Lack of home visitor confidence on how to complete visits over the phone	11%	31
Limited time available due to other demands at home	37%	105
No access to printer for activities and handouts	37%	105
Older children and other family members in the home during the visit	56%	158
Other (see below)	11%	32
Total		283

Responses from those who selected "other" referenced challenges with phone lines not working well such as a poor connection, no phone available or low audio quality with six (2.1%) responses in this area. Other issues with using technology for sharing curriculum (blurry photos, viewing on a small screen, access to trustworthy and safe platforms, and a lack of experience with technology) surfaced from another five (1.7%) respondents. Three respondents reported that families not responding or maintaining communication, difficulty engaging families for a complete home visit that includes activities, and being unable to see the parent do activities while facilitating parent-child interaction are additional challenges. Working with a primary caregiver who has a learning or cognitive disability that is a barrier to communicating over the phone was reported by two home visitors.

Participants who selected "other" included the following comments:

> *"Families that are connected to foster families and visits require other officials or to be in person but cannot because of virus."*

"Families prefer in person contact. Virtual is not the same or necessary in some families' eyes."

"It is hard to do 45 minute visits on the phone. After talking about the different areas that are in the PAT program, I feel like there is a lot of time left. You don't have that quiet time when you watch mom and child interact."

"I've found the biggest challenge (besides my own children at home that I am now "homeschooling") is not being able to sit and personally be with my clients. It's hard when they are struggling and I can't be sitting in the same room with them."

12. What are the most challenging limitations of completing video visits at this time? (Check all that apply) If you are not doing video visits, please skip this question.

Answer	%	Count
Confidentiality/HIPPA concerns	16%	42
Families in crisis	34%	89
Families with technology limitations (lack of computer/ stable internet)	71%	188
Family not comfortable doing video visit	46%	121
Home visitor has children at home and hard to focus without interruption	30%	80
Home visitor uncomfortable doing video visit due to limitations of work-at-home set up	10%	27
Lack of guidance on how to complete video visits	6%	16
Lack of home visitor confidence on how to complete video visits	9%	25
Limited time available due to other demands at home	29%	76
No access to printer for activities and handouts	28%	74
Older children and other family members in the home during the visit	48%	127
Other (see below)	9%	24
Total		264

Although twenty-four respondents wrote comments, several of the comments detailed multiple challenges and limitations. Most expressed were challenges related to children (e.g., child is crying, wants to grab the phone, parents give the phone to the child, child reacts differently to virtual visits than home visits, child is confused as to why the home visitor isn't there in person or performs better when the home visitor is present, or several children talking at once). Various comments (5) clustered around phone and computer issues (e.g., *"Different types of communication not available to all families and home visitor. The constant*

direction on what types of platforms/apps we are allowed to use", "Some of the first virtual visits "cut out" due to poor internet, so the visitor feels it is just "easier" to call the family", "No computer access. Not able to save PG/PVR forms onto computer when completed", phone reception issues, and "We live in a small rural area and it is difficult to do visits when our internet doesn't work well and some families have had to borrow phone from friends or family members that have phones with data on them"). Other challenges mentioned more than once center on difficulties with (1) activities (mom does not want to gather items for activities or does not encourage child to activities, "...Some children have no interest in showing me and doing the activity even if mom is doing her best to get them to cooperate"), and (2) handouts ("I wish the PAT curriculum would let me share the activity pages so I can email my clients", "Having to share the handouts through picture," and "According to the mothers, they do not have time to read all the handouts including (ASQ'S)"). Six participants noted they had no challenges with virtual visits.

Several unique comments and sentiments were offered:

> "New parents that want to come in the group and we are doing visits without physical signature from parent survey or intake paperwork"

> "I feel like I have to 'chase' more families to get them to agree and keep virtual visits"

> "Feeling like I can't do as much for participants going through a crisis"

> "We have one of 6 home visitors who is uncomfortable doing the video visits and just finds that the phone visits work for her better"

On a positive note, 1 respondent stated "Parents skillfully use social networks like WhatsApp - Skype - Zoom - Facebook - Instagram etc." and another noted that "she enjoys hearing the moms describe what the child's actions and reactions are to the activities over the phone. Moms are really learning to verbalize what they are seeing the child do."

## 13. What percentage of your families have phones with sufficient minutes available for phone visits?

69

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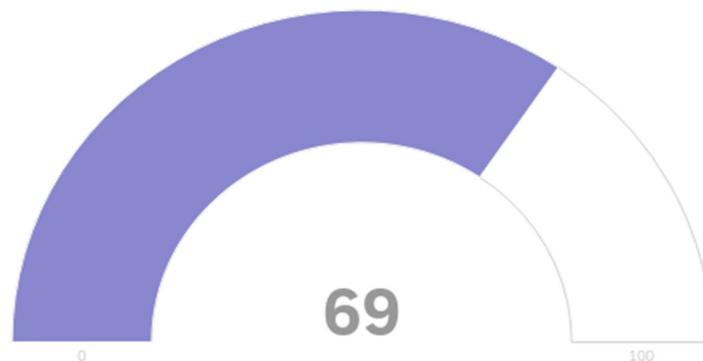
14. What percentage of your families have both a computer, tablet, or smart phone and internet access for virtual/video visits?
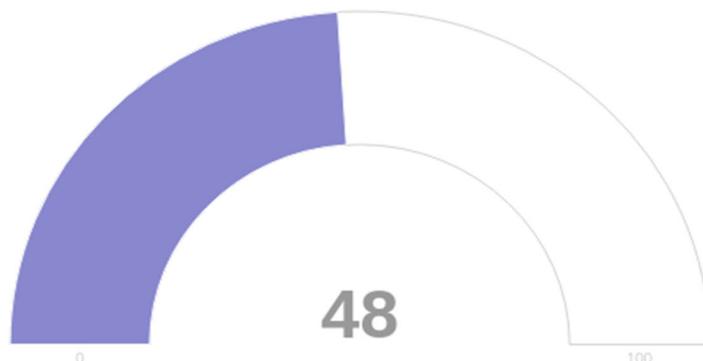
15. Some programs have implemented virtual group connections. Have you started any virtual group connections (prenatal, teen parent, parenting group, etc.) to engage families?
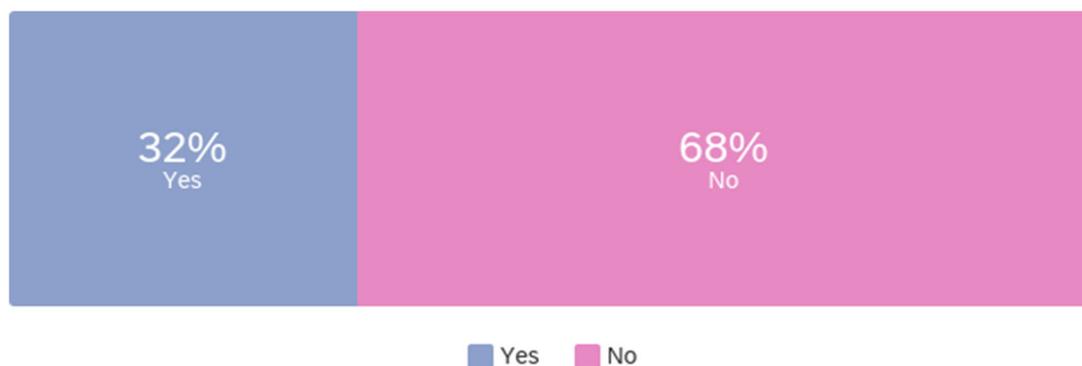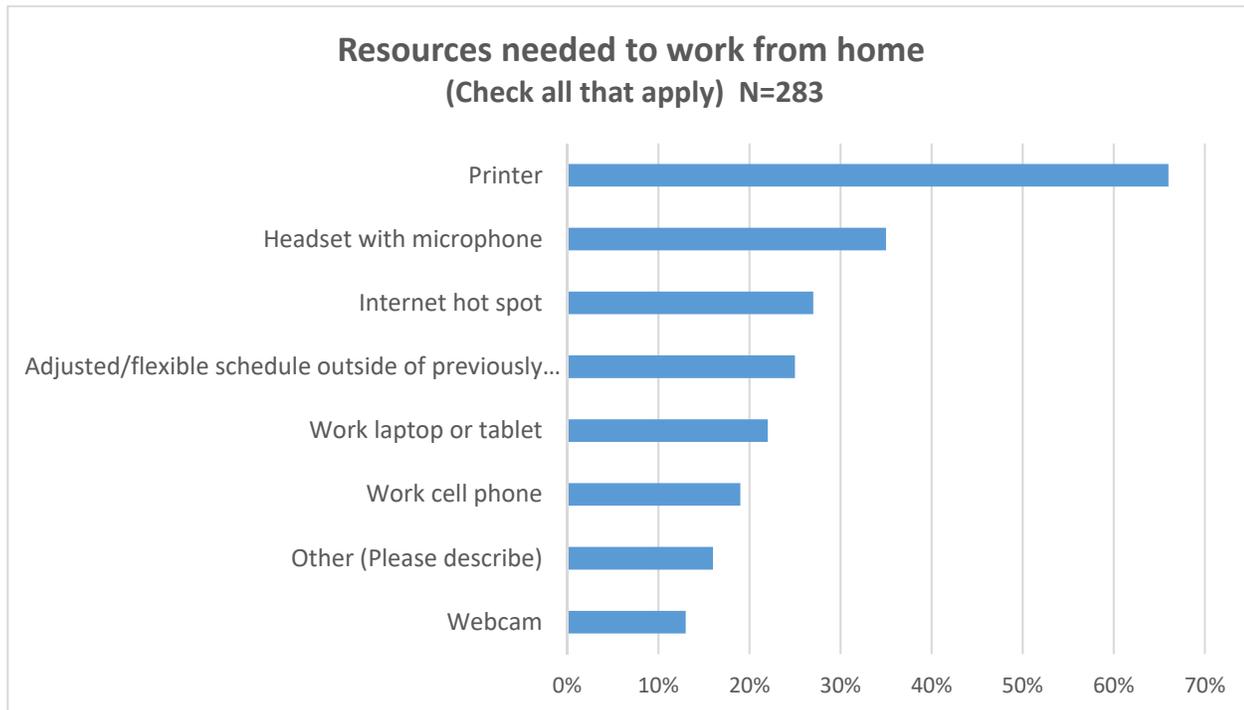

Answer	%	Count
Yes	32%	91
No	68%	194
Total	100%	285

Remote Work/Supervision/Training

16. What approaches to virtual connections with other staff members have been used? (Check all that apply)

Answer	%	Count
Email check-ins	77%	225
Phone calls	86%	251
Video conferencing	88%	256
Total		292

17. What resources would be helpful for you to better do your work from home? (Check all that apply)

Resources needed to work from home
(Check all that apply) N=283

17. What resources would be helpful for you to better do your work from home? (Check all that apply)

Answer	%	Count
Printer	66%	186
Headset with microphone	35%	99
Internet hot spot	27%	75
Adjusted/flexible schedule outside of previously held office hours, etc.	25%	70
Work laptop or tablet	22%	61
Work cell phone	19%	55
Webcam	13%	38
Other (see below)	16%	46
Total		283

Of the 44 "other" open-ended responses of resources needed, the most frequently listed, by 15 respondents, were printers and related supplies of printer ink and paper. One mentioned needing a printer that could print 2-sided documents, and another needed a printer that could scan documents. Four respondents listed laptops with one adding "with camera", one "with updated technology" and one specifying a "working" laptop. Additional office equipment listed included four needing a comfortable office chair, two needing scanners and office supplies, one needing a desk. Several mentioned needs related to Wi-Fi connections, faster internet, internet and cell phone subsidies, and updated cell phones with video capability for completing virtual visits. One respondent commented "I have all above, but after using for many hours, phone and hot spot Internet goes too slow and unable sometimes getting connecting with some of the video conferencing through the WebEx."

A few comments related to sharing visit materials with three needing online access to curriculum/assessments and two needing a scanner. Three comments related to challenges with home equipment with one mentioning a need for a desk top monitor and two citing difficulties using tablets. Additional unique comments included a need for a reduction of requirements: *"Less demands, Less time for supervisions and meetings. Visit should be once a month unless there is a crisis. Less paperwork this is a volunteer program but the paperwork demand shows otherwise. Do not take on new clients until this is over."* and a need for a better resourced out of office work set up: *"Office space at home with materials and forms".*

Six commented they are still working at the office, and on a positive note, nine staff reported their agencies provide all the resources they need to be able to work from home.

18. What percentage of your caseload have you been able to keep engaged after switching to virtual visits? (Home Visitors – please answer for your caseload; Supervisors – please answer for your overall program.)

Answer	%	Count
1-25%	3%	9
26-50%	9%	26
51-75%	29%	86
76-100%	59%	177
Total	100%	298

19. Has the frequency of staff supervision increased?
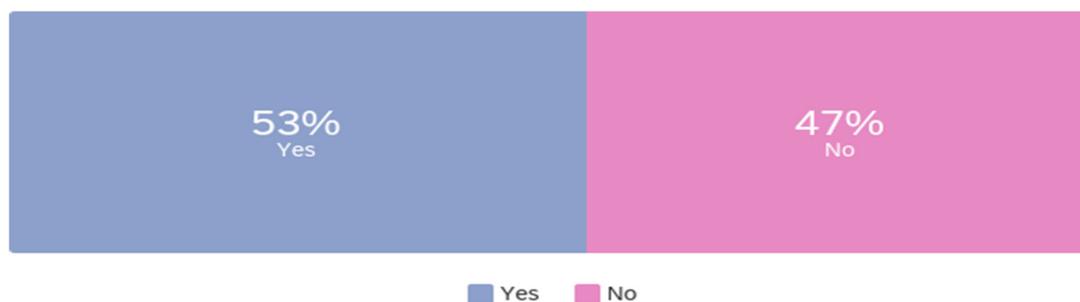
Answer	%	Count
Yes	53%	161
No	47%	142
Total	100%	303

20. On average, what is the current frequency of virtual supervision (administrative and/or reflective)?

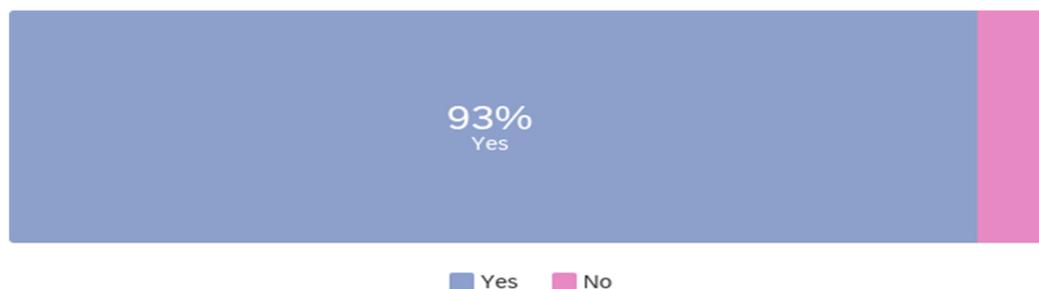| Answer	%	Count
Daily	13%	39
Twice a week	16%	48
Weekly	59%	179
Every other week	9%	27
Monthly	3%	8
Total	100%	301

21. On average, what is the current frequency that you are connecting with your mental health consultant for guidance and support?

Answer	%	Count
Daily	3%	7
Twice a week	2%	6
Weekly	12%	30
Every other week	19%	46
Monthly	64%	158
Total	100%	247

22. Professionals that serve at-risk families sometimes find their work stressful and experience burnout. Choose the statement below that best fits how you feel currently:

Answer	%	Count
I enjoy my work. I have no symptoms of burnout.	21%	62
Occasionally, I am under stress, and I don't always have as much energy as I once did, but I don't feel burned out.	59%	177
I am definitely burning out and have one or more symptoms of burnout, such as physical and emotional exhaustion.	16%	49
The symptoms of burnout that I'm experiencing won't go away. I think about frustration at work a lot.	3%	9
I feel completely burned out and often wonder if I can go on. I am at the point where I may need some changes or may need to seek some sort of help.	2%	5
Total	100%	302

23. At this time, are you able to access online training?

Answer	%	Count
Yes	93%	269
No	7%	21
Total	100%	290

24. What percentage of your families have recently lost employment or experienced reduction in working hours/pay related to COVID-19? (Home Visitors – please answer for your caseload; Supervisors – please answer for your overall program.)

Answer	%	Count
1-25%	31%	90
26-50%	30%	88
51-75%	28%	82
76-100%	12%	34
Total	100%	294

25. What resources are you having difficulty in providing to parents due to the impact of the coronavirus on agencies and organizations? (Check all that apply)

Answer	%	Count
Bill assistance	38%	104
Child care	28%	76
Food/formula	41%	111
Diapers and wipes	50%	136
Basic household items including disinfecting products	50%	137
Housing/rent assistance	44%	121
Transportation	29%	80
Mental health services	25%	69
Well-child doctor visits	31%	84
Unemployment services	35%	95
Legal services	10%	28
Other – (Doula services, shelter, DHS services-Medical Card, SNAP, Physician Offices are cancelling well-child and immunization visits, Child and Family Connections, Referrals for Early Intervention)	8%	21
Total		273

26. How easy is it for you to work remotely? (Choose one) If you are not working remotely, please skip this question.

Answer	%	Count
Very Challenging	3%	9
Challenging	27%	77
Neutral	29%	83
Somewhat easy	25%	71
Very easy	15%	43
Total	100%	283